

JEN'S STORY

When my mum first introduced me to him, I was too young at 8 years old to really understand and trust my 'instincts'. He made my mum smile and laugh, he was nice to me. We played tickles, and he took me to McDonald's after he yelled at us. He took me to the movies when his hand slipped, he took me to mini golf when I didn't like 'things', but it was ok, because like he said - he wasn't hurting me, was he?

For the next 9 or so years until I left home, my stepfather convinced me that I would die, my mother would die, my grandparents would die, if anyone found out about our 'alone time'; despite having been able to condition me into thinking for most of those years that he loved me just the same way every stepfather loves their new daughter. Both mum and I lived in fear, through the physical, verbal, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse, but I never told her what he did to me. I had to protect her, I had to protect everyone.

After I left home, I locked my past, my memories in the darkest recesses of my mind, and focused on moving forward with my life and trying to forget it ever happened. My Mum stayed with him, he had broken her. I was so sure he had changed, and I had locked so many memories away that it would just destroy the current 'happiness' both my mum and I had found. I had a son and was confident he'd be safe, I had a daughter, and started to worry, I had another son, I was struggling, my marriage fell apart, I leaned on my mum and 'him'. My kids loved their 'Grumpy' so much, but when I walked in on a tickling game with Grumpy and my daughter, everything hit me - he was conditioning my baby girl.

I found my courage, I found my strength,
I found my voice.

My baby was NOT going to go through what I did. I finally told my mum, she left him. We are still struggling, years later to rebuild our relationship. We know we are not to blame, we are victims; but the damage he caused runs so very deep, we are also survivors. I am proud be able to share my story and I hope I have managed to help someone find their courage, their strength, their voice.



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